Why the American Historical Association Needs Thorough Reorganization

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

Introduction.

The existing discontent in the American Historical Association has been a matter of slow growth. It could never have become general if it had been wisely met. There has been a persistent effort to becloud the issues and depreciate the critics, while disregarding the constitution and well-established business methods. Because a select few were determined to keep the control of the Association in their own hands they would not heed warnings nor consult the wishes of the nearly three thousand members.

The time has come when the actual conditions should be made known to the whole Association as the only means of ending the customary practice of concealment, favoritism and self-seeking. It is now necessary to decide whether the Association shall be turned toward a realization of its ideals or be allowed to continue as virtually the private property of a few who, only after nearly a score of years, pass on their claims to their favorites. Every member has a moral responsibility to consider the facts, openly and bravely to express his conclusions, and actively aid in bringing about the needed reforms.

We do not presume to hold a brief for our fellow-members. Being free from restraining ties, and not afraid to investigate and speak out, we have in the past expressed our disinterested opinions and we shall continue to do so in the future.

Our friends are entitled to know that by no aid or sympathy of ours shall self-seekers succeed self-seekers. Our sole aim is to help forward a thorough-going reform, so that the Association may become master of itself and elect its own officers.

Whatever is new in this pamphlet is based on official evidence obtained from the records; copies are in the hands of each of us and are open to the inquiry or inspection of all.

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WHY THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEEDS THOROUGH REORGANIZATION.

I

For several years there has been much criticism of the management of the American Historical Association. Things have happened and favorites have been picked just as certain persons could always foretell. Who ran the machinery was not quite clear to those on the outside; and those on the inside gave forth little information except in ready-made explanations. Because precise information was unobtainable the Council was usually spoken of as the center of power and planning; but no keen observer had any doubts that there was a small group with subtle and far-reaching influences.

Accordingly, such sentences as these were often heard: "The oligarchy does as it pleases." "There's no look-in unless you have the favor of the 'old guard.'" "We are run by a big-university trust." At the smokers cynical wits would remark: "The mills of the gods are grinding proverbially small." "The crown is less brilliant and less uncertain than of yore." "The editorial board has presented the Association with another president; both are doing as well as could be expected and have further hopes." No one felt confident of getting relief, so harmonious were the rulers, so well-disciplined were the aids, so patient were the expectants. Although even whisperers understood how destructive the disfavor of the rulers might be, criticism became less and less cautious.

The choice of officers was of course the key to the situation. From time immemorial the Council had named a nominating-committee, and, to save it all trouble, handed it a "slate." Then the committee solemnly reported this list as the result of its deliberations. As this practice was long kept a profound secret, there was no opportunity to expose it. Later, when attacked, it was, at first, defended as wholly consistent with the constitutional provision, that the "officers shall be elected by ballot at each regular meeting of the Association." But, in November, 1912, the Council, seeing that criticism was increasing, undertook to beguile it by naming a nominating-committee four weeks in advance. Not until about two weeks before the committee was to report were the members of the Association invited to offer suggestions as to candidates. The Council also provided for the appointment in December, 1912, of a nominating-committee to report a year later. Everybody acquainted with committees, human nature and politics knows that committees usually reflect the body that carefully chooses them.

Finally, at the business meeting in Charleston, in December, 1913, there was a vigorous protest and a demand that the Association be given entire control of both nominations and elections. The letters published in the *Nation* a few weeks later, made other distinct and well-remembered complaints. One clear-eyed critic said that the trouble was less with the constitution and the Council than with a ring, whose

membership was well known. The charges, especially about the "old guard," the "oligarchy" and kindred conditions were in jest or earnest on all lips.

Again the spokesman of the "old guard," as the inner circle is euphoniously called, denied all charges, felt aggrieved and unappreciated, but found some consolation in believing that the critics were expressing only personal impressions and prejudices. One champion, better acquainted with hard work in subordinate positions than with the actual doings of the persons whom he undertook to defend, boldly declared: "I know of no oligarchy in the Association. I know only a group of men, all of them distinguished scholars, who have been willing to spend time and money in building up the Association, and in organizing and advancing historical interest and historical scholarship throughout the United States." How fortunate we should be if that were a true picture!

II

The present writer's special interest in the reform movement began after the Charleston meeting, where he was made a member of the Council. His friendships had been more with the so-called "oligarchy" than with the reformers. But one of the reformers referred to him as the only new officer taken from outside the office-holding group held responsible for the objectionable conditions. Being at least without fear and having no axe to grind, the line of duty was clear: to make investigations and to report the facts so that the 3,000 members of the Association could know and control what is their own.

An important fact was learned early in the Council meeting at New York, last November, when the treasurer reported a considerable deficit; and gave notice that, unless this condition should be remedied in the near future, someone else must take charge of the finances. Of course this condition would gladly be remedied. But an attempt to make a large appropriation wait upon the report of a special committee on finances met with prompt defeat.

About this time it also appeared that members of the Council and perhaps others might put in expense accounts. Yet no one knew just what the system was, for there was none. This suggested some inquiries as to the nature and amount of these bills. Early in the meeting of the Council at Chicago, last December, an investigation and a reform of actual conditions were urged. The propriety of paying the bare railroad fares of secretaries and of others in clearly exceptional cases was not questioned. But why should men with comfortable incomes be reimbursed for slight expenses in connection with honors they had eagerly sought, highly enjoyed and resolutely retained, when other persons, as worthy and capable, would gladly have accepted them for the distinction conferred? The money were a thousand times better spent in encouraging and rewarding brilliant young scholars able to demonstrate that the criterion of a historian is the quality of what he writes, not the offices he holds.

Plain truisms caused looks of surprise on several faces. A prominent member of the Council quickly took issue and insisted that unless we put in such bills, whether we needed reimbursement or not, it would make an invidious comparison with men coming longer distances than

they could afford to pay for! Before the reformer could quite grasp such reasoning the Council showed that it had a method of dealing with a question brought up in criticism—quickly to put off its consideration for a year! We shall soon understand why.

As yet, the full extent of the financial waste was not suspected. Official accounts show that during the last three years the Council has spent over $970 on traveling expenses alone, for some of its members and two chairmen of committees. The bills ranged from bare transportation and pullman fares to enough to cover all expenses whatsoever, and, from the same persons between the same places, varied as much as 30 per cent. in different years. The possibility of getting expenses paid convinces some men that they cannot afford to spend a dollar of their own money to go where, otherwise, they would gladly have spent freely to go!

Never before 1913 had anyone suspected that it was "necessary" for the chairman of the program-committee to attend the Council meeting at the expense of the Association. The discovery once made, at the cost of $19., it became an inexorable "necessity," in 1914, at the cost of $60—*even after the program had been printed*—to have him come a thousand miles with the president of the Association to give the Council unimportant details, so as to attend the banquet and the Council luncheon in a wealthy New York club.

III

A casual remark revealed the fact that this so-called "Council luncheon" cost the Association $77.75. The present writer and two members that had served the previous year in the Council, had supposed, from the nature of the invitation and the general talk, that the luncheon, like the regular banquet, was at the expense of one or more generous hosts. Why no! It should, of course, be paid for by the Association, we were told. A few minutes later, two of us agreed to reimburse the treasury, and a check for the total was forthwith given. This becoming known, the gentleman that had advocated taking money for expenses willy nilly urged that the plan of reimbursement be given up, for "it would be embarrassing" to a certain person! The attempt, on the following day, to get the Council to make a clear and frank statement in the minutes met with prompt and ludicrous assurances that the members who were responsible for the luncheon had already paid their shares. It was indeed sad to learn that a "necessary" luncheon could be so treacherous as to cost each of them $3.25, but it was encouraging to see what rapid progress in correct notions in the use of trust funds had been made over night.

Later it was learned that these luncheons had been a regular feature since 1910, costing the Association $285.02 for the five years. The Council might *much more conveniently and with the saving of nearly an hour's time* have met in the hotel where most of the visitors stopped, and where a room would gladly have been furnished *gratis* and an excellent luncheon supplied at one-third the price paid, and appropriate to the purse of each person present.

The payments for these luncheons and the two chairmen of program-committees—not to mention other things—were neither authorized

by the Council nor officially or specifically reported to the Council or to the Association. Each affair was put through privately by a few individuals: someone told someone that it was "necessary" and all right; someone else concurred; the treasurer paid the bills, and the items, known only to those interested in such practices, were to be forever hidden in the general statement of "Expenses Executive Council, $380.17"—unless someone, as they say, "possessed of the Devil," and a pickaxe, should get into the Council and dig them out. The first suspicion of these things came from a chance oral remark on the part of a knowing member of the Council. This, quickly followed up, led to the disclosure of the foregoing and other illuminating facts.

IV

After insistent and repeated requests for an itemized statement of payments to the editorial board, and four weeks of waiting, it was learned that the editorial board also had most remarkable "necessities". Two meetings of the editorial board a year, at some point near the geographic center, with expenses paid, might be considered reasonable. During seven of the twenty years four meetings have been held each year, always at the expense of the *Review*. During all the other years, except 1896, it has had to pay for three annual meetings. Being a quarterly, these three meetings, if three were necessary, should have been about four months apart. As a rule, there was an early spring or early summer meeting, and then none until the end of November. This indicates that frequent meetings were unnecessary. Nevertheless, another meeting of the board was regularly called in December at the time and place where the Association held its annual convention. Accordingly, these December meetings, because usually far out of the geographic center, were as unnecessary as expensive—but not for the board. *For these needless December meetings alone the board has drawn from the Review's treasury over $2,000!* While thus engaged in unsuspected junketings they assumed the airs of self-sacrifice, and remarked how they were devoting their time and money to build up the Association! For them there was no

> "dropping buckets into empty wells,
> And growing old in drawing nothing up."

With the honors and at the expense of the *Review*, the members of the editorial board annually set forth on these holiday trips and came back with new offices, until each completed the "joy-ride" of the three-year presidential tour and wound up at his own inauguration as president of the Association and then to become a member of the Council for life.

At New Orleans, in 1903, four of them obtained less in offices than in money—$200.25. The machine was not yet working perfectly. But for nearly a decade—except twice, when "slates" were broken and Mr. Roosevelt and Professor Dunning were given long-merited honors—actual or previous members of the board of editors regularly grasped all three presidential offices, always at the expense of the *Review*. At the Charleston meeting, one member of the board, an ex-president—who in a score of years has been able to find a means of getting his expenses paid wherever he has gone in connection with either the

Association or the *Review*—obtained $13.00 besides his gratuitous title of "dean"—which is short for *life member of the Council, member and chairman of the editorial board, managing editor of the Review, acting secretary and virtually acting treasurer of the Association* (when his subordinate in Carnegie Institution is in Europe), and *self-chosen spokesman of the board, Council and Association.* Another secured the presidency and $49.00. Still another was promoted to the vice-presidency, but being an ex-member of the board he could not, alas, make the *Review* pay for his trip to get honors. And yet another, at once bursar, member and choice of the board, took a sweet revenge for this predecessor's cruel lot by securing $52.10 and the second vice-presidency. To Chicago the board came in full force at the modest expense of $182.71 to the *Review*, saw its colleagues safely advanced—but it met with a sad *contretemps*, as will soon appear.

The very interesting itemized accounts indicate that the "dean" and the bursar adore the odd penny.[1] On one occasion the good "dean" levied on the treasury for 67 cents. The most learned dry-as-dust is challenged to show anything to rival this since Judge Marcy, after riding the circuit, put in a bill reading, "For mending my pantaloons, 50 cents." But some men are great enough to be devoted to the penny without disdaining the dollar. The bursar, in the course of not very many years received, to the end of 1914, $452.17 for traveling expenses from the treasury he so lovingly guards. The "dean" during longer and somewhat varied periods of self-sacrifice and office-holding has likewise secured $669.47 from the *Review* alone, besides $140.65 from other well selected fountains of financial refreshment. And that is not all, for there are noteworthy gaps in the record.[2] Only a recent president, who, in the course of his bashful editorial term of fifteen years drew $1,516.92 for traveling expenses from the *Review* alone, has surpassed him. Once the "dean" seemed to have neglected his opportunities. Lest the puzzled investigator should suffer a fatal shock, the ever-thoughtful bursar vouchsafed the soothing assurance that the "dean" had not paid his own expenses, but only had drawn them from another fund!

And let all other committees hereby learn of the editorial board, that a majority is not required to make a "good-enough-Morgan" quorum for the purpose of getting traveling expenses. None but the bursar could evolve an adequate theory to cover such operations: "The fewer the editors able to be present, the more necessary I have thought it that these should go." This justifies calling meetings of the board at far-off Charleston, New Orleans, Madison and Chicago,

[1] A few of the "dean's" bills were as follows: $7.56, $14.88, $9.06, $7.63, $.67, $5.81, $5.77, $2.57, $6.97. The bursar showed his delicate appreciation of money values in the following figures: $12.56, $18.81, $20.12, $19.77, $18.88, $10.52, $17.72, $11.77, $6.51, $12.33, $21.56, $18.34, $12.21.

[2] These statements, in answer to a request, came through the hands of both the secretary and the treasurer: "The following list is believed to be a complete statement, except as hereafter noted, of the amounts paid to members of the American Historical Association [exclusive of Council] for travel for the years 1896–1914, with the exception of the year 1906 for which the vouchers have not been found. No travel expenses appear to have been paid prior to 1896. It has not been possible to indicate the amounts paid in 1897–1899 to members of the Committee of Seven. It is known that this committee held various meetings and that the traveling expenses of members of these meetings were paid, but the vouchers do not provide the information necessary for a correct statement.

and would amply suffice for calling one at San Francisco. And if only the "dean" and the bursar could go, O Necessity, how sweet and blessed would be thy ministration![3]

These editorial opportunities and honors, during twenty years, 1895–1914, have been confined not only to a very few, but these few must come from certain great institutions—Carnegie Institution, Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania, Columbia, Cornell, Chicago, and (for a short period) Michigan, except that for one year there was a representative from Princeton and, for a few months, one from Wisconsin. At first it was secretly held that the *Review* belonged to six universities. But this theory was damaged after one year, when Princeton's ownership was carried off in the pocket of an editor that went to Columbia. The greatest of living historians disagree as to whether this professor or the "dean" is the father of a certain foundling-theory soon to be noticed. Wisconsin's affections were still more cruelly trifled with. Some will think the story sad, although short; others, otherwise. When it dawned on a certain Harvard member of the board that he was outstaying the proprieties, he withdrew and secured the election of a professor in Wisconsin University. This was considered most chivalrous. Only lately has it become known, except to a few, that the new member had already accepted a call to Harvard!

And most members of this board have held office nearly half a generation—one for eighteen years, another for seventeen, two for fifteen, one for thirteen and one for eleven years.

Why did the Council, whose duty it is to elect the members of the board, allow almost life-tenure? In violation of the contract and propriety, the board has regularly chosen its own members, and its members in the Council have run the Council and easily put through their "slate." The latest—happily the last—illustration was typical, except in outcome. A member of a certain university, feeling himself succumbing to modesty, after fifteen years of service, and having the noble precedents of previous associates from Harvard, Cornell and Columbia, quite innocently had the board pick one of his fellow-professors for the succession. Thirty days later when it was the duty of the Council to fill the vacancy, this associate's name was presented and supported by the inner group—the four members of the board that were also members of the Council, two of them "for life."

They were asked if the board had not caucused on this name; and if so, by what right it, a mere agent of the Association, had presumed to interfere with the duties of the Council. Taken aback by so unusual a question, the spokesman of the board could not deny the caucusing, but declared that "the Council had asked the board to recommend someone." Challenged to tell when the Council had ever made such a request of the editorial board, he stammeringly replied, "Well, at least *some members* of the Council requested it!"—There were "some members of the Council" on the board, and these were and are the real ring.

To make sure of ending this practice, it was proposed to substitute in place of the ring's candidate one of the most accomplished historians in the Association, who is not only a lifelong editor but is the person first invited to become editor of the *Review* when it was organizing.

[3] See appendix for letters about the board's expenses, etc.

Although this gentleman's qualities are so well known that some of the ring then and there spoke of him as being "presidential timber," one after another made absurd objections to him, which were so easily ridiculed that the ring sought postponement and dropped its candidate. This exposure broke up this twenty-year-old monopoly, and led to the election in the proper manner of an excellent person, coming from a remote university.

V

Spencer says, "Now, always and everywhere, there arises among men a theory conforming to their practice." We have seen something of such theories. But there was still need of another theory—a theory that would forever keep concealed the now obvious fact that trust funds have been used in personal interests. What theory could do that? The theory that the *Review* belonged to the men that had used it as if it were their own. This theory was duly invented, but apparently was never intended for public use. The earliest written reference to it is found in a letter of February 28, 1914, in which the "dean" privately reproved one of the critics in the *Nation* for not knowing, any more than did the 3,000 other members of the Association, that the *Review* belonged to the editors. But why did not the "dean" give, in his own letter to the *Nation*, some hint of this alleged ownership?

The present writer, although one of the founders and guarantors of the *Review*, never heard of this theory until, in the Council meeting in New York, the unwelcome question was asked, "Who owns the *Review*?"

"It belongs to the editors," said the "dean." "But why raise the question?" "Why raise the question?" he said at different times. The theory is excellent for private use; but it will bear inspection no better than a bubble. No one has ever told how the editorial board obtained ownership. Why did the founders and guarantors in 1898 transfer to the Association their power of electing and controlling the editorial board, if the aim was to make the editors *owners*, and not keep them mere agents?

The ancients were confident that Atlas held up the world. Certainly it was held up, and who but Atlas could do it? They were entirely indifferent as to what Atlas stood on. So the learned "dean," not knowing that trustees cannot become owners without the consent of all the parties to the trust, finds in the fact that the editorial board was given the right to make and annul contracts and control funds—a common duty of trustees—conclusive evidence that the editors must own what they controlled!

It is indeed a queer ownership without a right to enjoy the profits, except under the name of "traveling expenses." At three different times $300 in profits have been turned over to the Association. There was no other proper disposition to make of them. Yet because of certain specifications by the board, who had no right to make them, that entirely proved that the editors might have put it all in their own pockets. And because the arrangement of 1898 had some features which were absurd as between principal and agent, at least some members of the editorial board can read their title clear in these absurdities of their own making! When in dire need, it is a consolation to have a theory, although it be as unsubstantial as a cloud.

When the Association learns what the agreement is between Carnegie Institution and the editorial board in regard to the editorship of the *Review*, it will better understand much that has heretofore been mysterious. As yet, the present writer has in vain sought specific and official information as to this arrangement. However, enough has been learned unofficially to warrant saying this much.

At the Chicago meeting it was moved that the Council serve the year's notice required to end the three-cornered arrangement between the Council (for the Association), the editorial board and the publishers, and declare the Council's intention to enter into no new contract except with the publishers. If this plan had been adopted it would have solved the difficulties: it would have stripped the editorial board of the anomalous power as agents to end a contract against their principal, which might be so used as to leave the Association without an organ, while the board itself would be wholly unable to maintain the *Review*. Finally, after long debate, it seemed necessary to remind the Council, dominated by the editorial ring, that this question, if not given proper solution, would be taken before the business meeting that afternoon, where the Association would quickly decide that, if it did not own the *Review*, it would proceed either to acquire it or to found another, and that it was easy to foresee what the status of the editorial board would then be. This more than "necessary" but unchristian hint caused the good "dean" to exclaim in desperation: "*The Review can get on without the Association as well as the Association can get on without the Review*!"

This remark suggested a blind leader. Soon one, then another and then another showed a desire to follow a leader with eyes for a compromise. Finally, all save one agreed that the question of the relation of the *Review* to the Association should be referred to the committee of nine to be appointed by and to report to the Association. Then the Association could deal with the question. From this moment editorial ownership was moribund. Since then the "dean," arrogating to himself the authority to speak for the board, and to use the *Review* as if it were in fact their private organ, has graciously suggested that the board might, if all else were lost, consent to run the *Review* as trustees for the cause of History! Possibly 3,000 members have some notion that the American Historical Association was founded to be a trustee for the cause of History, and that this trusteeship has not yet been delegated to editorial agents appointed for very limited and specific purposes.

VI

It has already been mentioned how the "oligarchy" long wrought out its plans by use of the well-known scheme of a nominating-committee. What it has since surrendered has been surrendered under compulsion. Its attitude has been one of depreciation and ridicule of the reform movement. For two years its aim has been to quiet discontent by seeming to yield, yet to have things as little changed as possible. If the "oligarchy" had wished to preserve as much as possible of its old power, what would it seek to preserve and how could it best be accomplished? First of all, the editorial board must maintain its sacred privilege of having its members become the presidents of the

Association. Secondly, it must keep as much as possible of its power —easily maintained under the present constitution and the status of the *Review*—by preventing the changes from cutting into this power. Thirdly, the only way to control the reform movement would be to make up the different committees so that a majority of each committee would be in sympathy with the present regime. Then each committee would be sure to choose a chairman that would look out for the results. This is exactly what has been done.

The chairman of last year's nominating-committee is a subordinate of one, and formerly a colleague of both members of the ring that must be advanced, although there was for years a very outspoken objection to the system of vice-presidential promotions—and this before any except a few suspected that there was an editorial ring "willing to spend time and money in building up the Association" by grasping the offices and "joy-riding" at the expense of the *Review*. Of course the selection of such a chairman was purely accidental, but no one will deny that it was remarkably fortunate for the ring.

The desired result being safely accomplished, this committee, steadied by the addition of the master politician of the ring (who, the first year he was member of the board charged the *Review* $54.00 for his trip to Indianapolis to deliver his own presidential address) and only one reformer, could be trusted to choose the committee of nine to consider the whole question of reform and the status of the *Review*. How well the plan worked is demonstrated by the result: The committee of nine at once elected as its chairman one who had long been a chief and beneficiary of the inner circle, enjoyed the anomalous arrangement between Carnegie Institution and the *Review*, and is largely responsible for the practices, irregularities and self-seekings against which the reform movement is directed. And from one or the other treasury he is known to have drawn, for traveling expenses, $1,716.84, aside from perhaps several hundred more, in doubt on account of unitemized and lost records. It would be difficult to name any sort of political hocus-pocus so generally recognized as such, as having for chairman of a reform committee one largely responsible for the things needing reform.

And the ring have entire confidence in the organization of this committee—which, although all else were unknown, should cause earnest reformers to distrust it. If this committee of nine wishes to inspire the confidence of reformers, it should reorganize in such a manner as to deserve their confidence.

My aim in putting these facts and comments before the members of the American Historical Association has been to show why, not how, the Association and the editorial board should be reorganized. Only a few of many reasons have been given. Other members know other reasons and will doubtless state them. All reformers should then try to coöperate.

The committee of nine, if properly made up, and the committee on nominations, even as it is, could greatly forward but they cannot hinder the reform movement, for it is daily growing in strength and determination and will not rest until

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

FREDERIC BANCROFT.

APPENDIX.

Metropolitan Club, Washington, D.C.
March 8, 1915.

Dear Professor Burr:

As you know, I am interested in the question of the ownership of the *American Historical Review* and in the reform of the practice of some of the members of the Council in putting in accounts for personal expenses. Both of these questions have been before the Council and are to be taken up again. As a member of the Council and especially interested in these questions I have asked and received from Mr. Bowen a full statement of all the payments made to the members of the Council on account of personal expenses. Understanding that you are the treasurer for the editorial board, or keep its accounts, I have the honor to request for the same official purpose that you send me, at your earliest convenience, a full and explicit statement as to all payments that have been made to any member of the editorial board on any account whatever, during the last three years.

Sincerely yours,
FREDERIC BANCROFT.

Prof. George L. Burr,
Cornell University,
Ithaca, N. Y.

March 20, 1915.

Dear Professor Burr:

Your favors of March 11 and 13 have been received.

I am not an accountant, and have no desire to inspect your books as treasurer. I only wish a detailed statement of all payments to members of the board during the past three years; and you can prepare that from your books more appropriately and accurately than anyone else. Will you kindly furnish me such a statement at your earliest convenience as promised in your favor of March 11?

If the items as entered do not explain themselves, will you please append the proper explanation so that I may understand each disbursement?

Sincerely yours,
FREDERIC BANCROFT.

April 17, 1915.

Dear Professor Burr:

I thank you for your letters of the 7th, 10th and 13th insts.

In the first you say that I "could have had in a quarter of the time the information desired, if you [I] had made use of the account-books (my own only source of knowledge) which I [you] at once put at your disposal in your [my] own city, and that it was this attempt to give you [me] even more than you asked that was the main cause of the delay."

To this I reply, that if you had complied with my request as made, understood and promised to be fulfilled, you would have needed hardly one-eighth of the time you took. Only in case of first giving me what I requested could you give me "even more than" I asked, for you did not, until later, give me anything whatever that I asked for. "More" is not properly associated with nothing. What you did, precisely expressed, was to fail to give me what I asked for, and to *offer* to arrange for me to *go and look for* that and other things.

Furthermore, the eagerness with which this was done without consulting my wishes and after promising to comply with them, was made rather ludicrous, when you subsequently wrote that you could not, *without waiting to obtain the consent of all the editors*, give me what I had asked for long since, and you had long since promised to supply! And this was after you had "given" me so *much "more"* than I requested!

Your making a virtue of complying at last, although you might have "stood on legal rights," is not very impressive. It is rather difficult to stand on legal rights unless one both has them and can maintain them. The question of the legal rights will be duly discussed elsewhere. I could easily have made the maintenance of your refusal impossible or perilous, either by taking the case into a court of equity or by getting a large majority of the members of the Council to join in my request.

But all these things are in the past tense. At least one feature of the statement of "editorial expenses" is very seriously in the future, for it amazes all the persons to whom I have shown it. As I intend, in the near future, publicly to comment on this and several other questions pertaining to the Association, I should be very glad to have from you, as the treasurer of the board, any answers you may choose to make to these questions:

1. After the treasury had annually paid for a May meeting of the editorial board in Washington and a November meeting in New York, why was a third meeting called only thirty days later, and at a great expense to the Association, at a place from 500 to 1,000 miles out of the geographic center?

2. Why was such a meeting of the board called at Charleston, for which you obtained $52.10 in expenses, when only half of the board could attend, and when other conditions were also unfavorable to things strictly pertaining to the work of the editorial board?

3. Do three members make a quorum for the purpose of getting expenses?

Sincerely yours,
FREDERIC BANCROFT.

April 29, 1915.

Dear Professor Burr:

Urgent matters have prevented a prompt answer to your letters of April 19th and 21st.

I shall await with interest the answer to my questions referred, as you say, to the board of editors, who "alone has the right to attempt an answer to them."

I beg still to consider my inquiry, about authorization for payments not strictly in the line of the duties of a trustee, entirely proper. A

trustee or agent may receive reimbursement for not strictly necessa expenditures or expenses only in case of authorization by the princip or the court. That it was necessary regularly to have two wint meetings only thirty days apart, whereas it sufficed to have meetin from three to seven months apart at other times, will, I fancy, be ve difficult to make clear to the Association. If the December meeti was necessary then the November meeting was not.

But you say "that the purpose of the December meeting [is] to ensu the presence of the editors for the hearing of the papers from which t *Review* must draw the most important body of its articles and for t discussion of their comparative availability for the purpose of t *Review*, as well as for such other deliberation as may very possibly required by action taken at that time by the Council or by the Associ tion." Will anyone maintain that papers condensed and otherwi specially prepared for reading to a small audience, could then and the be better judged than if recast to suit the *Review* and passed arou for careful reading by members of the editorial board? No! It h been those "other deliberations," most of all making "slates," year aft year and putting them through, that made meetings "necessar where the Council met in November and where the Association m in December.

Moreover, you and others of the editorial board maintain that t *Review* is your private property. Your board's deliberations at Chica were notoriously to protect that private claim and to dominate t politics of the Association through the four also in the Council. A when you found that the opinion of counsel did not suit your claim you undertook to conceal it. I challenge anyone to name any strict *Review* business done there that was worth one-fifth the $182 spe for that meeting.

Most remarkable of all is the way you first use the logic of the follo ing sentence and then attempt to escape from it. You say: "I ma add that, the fewer the editors able to be present, the more necessary have thought it that these should go." That beautifully suits t Charleston case, where only three of you needed to go for the offic obtained or held. Then you continue: "There have, however, bee bounds to this expenditure for travel." Why did you not menti where the bounds are to be found? Surely not in the "traveling e penses" when it was so "necessary" for the board to waste many hu dreds of dollars in going thousands of miles from the geographic cent to meet at Charleston and Chicago, and earlier at New Orleans a Madison. Where are the bounds? Nowhere. And your logic wou forbid setting bounds at San Francisco. If only the managing edit and the treasurer, or either of them, should go, why, how much "t more necessary" it would be for *them*, or *him*, to go!

But, happily, the exposure, now known far and wide, shields t treasury from such logic and further waste of trust funds.

Sincerely yours,

FREDERIC BANCROFT.

[END OF APPENDIX.]

SOME PROPOSED REFORMS.

In the *Nation* of February 26, 1914, I charged that the Historical Association was run by an inner circle or ring, the members of which perpetuated themselves in power by the use of well known political devices. The facts presented in substantiation of this charge were not publicly called in question, but the managing editor of the *Review* in a letter privately took me to task for including the members of the editorial board in the list of the officers of the Association, alleging that "The *Review* is the property of the board of editors, not of the Association." When called upon to explain the basis of this astounding claim, he expressed surprise that anyone should raise the question and admonished me to "take more pains to be well informed" before undertaking to criticise! At least 100 members of the Association have since been consulted on the question thus raised, not one of whom endorsed or until recently had ever even heard of the claim that the *Review* is the private property of the editors.

The managing editor also has the eccentric and unique theory that the Council should rise above the Association like a Prussian Academy; but he adds that its "regard for effective work of high grade must be tempered by constant regard for what will be satisfactory to the Association" of 3,000 members. It has required no little ingenuity in the past and it will require more in the future to reconcile the idea of an academy with the financial necessity of having 3,000 members. Why not get the Carnegie Institution to endow this Prussianized Council and dispense with the 3,000? Even so benevolent an arrangement might not protect this modern Maupertuis, this expounder of strange theories, from the pen of some new Doctor Akakia.

The reformers long labored under a serious disavantage in not being able to obtain information as to actual conditions. They were well aware of the existence of a ring, but its operations were carefully concealed. The rule was to admit to the inner shrine no one that had not gone through a period of probationary service on a committee. But even the wisest are not infallible. The reform movement has latterly received an ally where one was most needed—in the Council. And from his point of vantage he has carried on searching investigations and has obtained information long withheld from those on the outside.

The data collected and herewith presented in outline suggest the following as obvious and pressing reforms:

First. The present editors of the *Review* must renounce the claim of editorial ownership and recognize their position as agents of the Association, or give place to a board that will.

Second. The mysterious relation that exists between the *Review* and the Carnegie Institution of Washington should be made known to the Association. This information will be called for at the next annual meeting. The arrangement should be continued only in case it suits the best interests of the Association.

Third. There is no good reason for allowing the ex-presidents undemocratic life-membership on the Council. Whether objectionable

formerly or not, it is now thoroughly objectionable for several well known reasons; one of them is that some ex-presidents are actively engaged in academic work, have axes to grind, and their presence on the Council virtually deprives the Association of self-government.

Fourth. The practice of promoting the vice-presidents to the presidency has produced unsatisfactory results and should be discontinued. It has given to the ring the backing of three aspirants for the presidency by determining the order of their succession, thus making it all but impossible to break the slate annually prepared by the inner circle.

Fifth. All attempts to end boss-and-ring rule will be futile while the managing-editor and members of the board are allowed to be on the Council. The Council should elect and dominate the editorial board, and the board should aid and direct the managing-editor. It is tolerating just the reverse of all this that has been the direct or indirect cause of most of the unfortunate conditions in the Association.

Sixth. No personal expenses should be paid except after formal approval by a finance committee, and the treasurer's annual report to the Council and to the Association should contain individual and itemized statements of all such expenses.

It will doubtless be a great surprise to the members of the Association to learn that so many of the men who have held the highest offices and whose attendance has been so regular, have had their traveling expenses to the annual meetings paid from the treasury of the *Review*.

Members of the board of editors and of the Council attending the business meeting in November might very properly be reimbursed for bare railroad fares in excess of a certain fixed sum, so as to put those who come a long distance on something of an equality with those living nearer the place of meeting. Such an arrangement has been adopted by the Political Science Association and works satisfactorily.

Not much in the way of aiding these reforms is to be expected from the committee of nine as now constituted, for the leading idea in its organization was to prevent or check reform. Therefore, it behooves the members of the Association to develop and push through at the next annual meeting a definite plan that will end the evils long complained of in vain.

The undersigned, or either of his associates, will be glad to hear from those who have any suggestions to make.

JOHN H. LATANÉ.